

# The ROMANTIC





# Editorial IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE

But Not Very Much!



NOT EVERYBODY is in love with *The Romantic*, but those who do love her love her deeply and truly. Such descriptions as "a life-line" or "a link with sanity" are not uncommon among the letters we receive.

We know now, as we could not know when we began, that there are a number of real people out there in the wilderness of the modern world; and we can say with virtual certainty that there are very many more. We can say this because only a small number of people have so far had a chance to find *The Romantic*. We have not advertised widely; *The Romantic* is not the sort of publication which finds a place in the modern newsagent's shop; sometimes it seems surprising that she has found her way to as many readers as she has!

And so we feel that our work has scarcely begun; that if *The Romantic* could begin to reach the people who want her and need her and would love her as soon as they saw her, not only would she be serving the people she was made to serve, but our tiny Romantic Empire would begin to grow into something much larger and fuller; established in every part of the country, and in other countries too; making life richer and better and happier for every one reading this page and for many more who are not yet reading it.

It was thus that we began to think of ways to make *The Romantic* more generally known. Things being what they are in this rather dull world, most of them required her to be a great deal richer than she is at present. So our next step was to go to one who knows about these things and ask him how it is that magazines become rich. He answered in a single word; and the word was "advertising".

"We have tried advertising," we told him, "and it only seems to cost us money."

"No, no," he explained. You must persuade others to advertise their wares in your pages."

It seemed a splendid idea, though it presented certain problems. In the first place, we have seen the sort of advertisements that adorn the pages of the modern periodical. When they are not ugly, vulgar and loud, they are what is technically termed *grooshy*. Secondly, the modern advertiser prefers his chosen publication to have a large readership consisting of people who desire the latest

modern fandangles, rather than a small readership for whom time stopped at various dates (depending on the individual) between 1900 and 1939.

Difficult, we thought, but not insoluble. The fact that many of our staff and contributors live in the 19th century for most of the time presented the germ of a solution. Why not solicit advertising from the tradesmen of that period? We did so; and with not inconsiderable success. We had to exercise some discretion. Many of the proposed advertisements were quite vulgar. Some entirely immodest. These have been rejected. Of those that remain, we fear not all will meet the approval of the most discriminating reader. Alas, commerce and compromise are two names for but a single thing.

However, we are not hard-headed businessmen and there was, we fear, a flaw in our scheme. Arrived back in the 20th century, we counted the monies we had received in payment. They came to the grand sum of fifteen pounds, seven shillings and fourpence three-farthings. A handsome enough sum when it was collected, but here not enough to pay for the printing of the cover or a small advertisement in a weekly review. Our advertisers have fared equally badly, for we guiltily reflect that few of our readers will be in a position to patronise them. May we ask those who are frequently in the Victorian era to make a special point of buying from the merchants who have supported your *Romantic*?

The story has a happy ending, for we have presented the money to dear Miss Fothering-gay, who only visits the 20th century for the few hours a week she is metaphysically compelled to; and she has used it to engage two footmen, invest in a self-feeding ice safe, present Pippit with a Yankee rubber baby, the which she has long coveted, and put a little by for a rainy day.

Nonetheless, our initial problem is no nearer to solution than heretofore; and our confidence in our own entrepreneurial endowment is dashed utterly. We turn, therefore, to our readers, and hope that you will join the *Friends of The Romantic*, to pledge your support for your Romantic publications; and build the Empire for the betterment of all.

# The New BOHEMIANS

An address delivered by Miss Lucinda Truitt to the Philosophical Society of University College Galway on the 15th of March.

MY LORDS, ladies and gentlemen; I do not know whether any of you here have seen us, or have heard of us before. To the world at large we are known as Victorians or as Romantics. Some people say that we live exactly as if we were still in the Victorian era, and that we have turned our backs upon the modern world. Well, that is partly true, but tonight, I would like to go a little more deeply into what exactly we are and do and believe.

As a matter of fact, it is unusual for us to speak about ourselves and about the Romantic movement in quite the way that we are going to speak to you tonight. When we speak to fellow Romantics, in person, through our wireless station, which is called The Imperial Home Service or in one of the Romantic publications, we can assume that every one knows in advance roughly what the thing is all about.

On the other hand, when we speak to the press or the television cameras, one has to give a rather crabbed and economical version of the truth. This is not from a desire to conceal anything, but because you would be amazed just how little can be said, even in a long television interview. As for newspaper articles, well, the least said the better. In either case one must content oneself with a sort of caricature of what one is. It makes one realise that people who depend upon television and newspapers for their information as to what is going on in the world, must have a very strange and garbled picture of things. But I digress. If I am to give you a true picture of what it is to be a Romantic, I had better tell you a little of the story of Romanticism. And, as with all good stories, I had better begin at the beginning.

The Romantic Movement began in Oxford in the early 1980s. It was not called the Romantic movement then. It was not called anything, as far as I recall. It consisted of a group of undergraduates—well, mostly they were undergraduates. A few were older and a few were not officially connected with the University at all. What these chaps—they were mostly girls, in fact, but they were called "the chaps" for some reason—what these chaps had in common was, broadly speaking, some sort of an inclination toward the past and a disinclination for the modern world.

Exactly what form this took differed greatly; but certain common themes soon emerged. The first was dressing up. Not many Romantics, then or now, dress as we are dressed tonight. Most Romantics look a little less noticeable when they walk down the street, but all Romantics adopt a style of dressing which does not belong fully to the early 1980s. They may dress in 1930s style or in 1920s style. They may adopt a modified form of Edwardian dress, which is known as neo-Arcadian. This might consist



merely of a lacy Edwardian style blouse above a plain, calf-length skirt, topped off by a piled-up, neo-Edwardian hairstyle. Other Romantiquettes adopt a sort of Angela Brazil prefect look, with navy blue skirt and woolly—the *fillette sérieuse*, as we call that style. Some even adopt styles which belong partly to the past and partly to the future. We will come to the Romantic conception of the future in a moment. But whatever style a Romantic adopts, it is stylish, poised and elegant, and it is a statement of values; a rejection of the spirit of the modern world.

Because it concentrates so much on clothes and appearances and on the æsthetic surfaces of things, Romanticism is sometimes thought of as rather superficial; and sometimes it is rather superficial because—well, because why should one not be superficial when one feels like it? But at the same time, clothes and style can express a scale of values. The greasy locks and soiled caftan of the 1960s "hippie", to take a rather stale example, were not merely a sartorial matter. They expressed a rejection—or an attempted rejection—of an entire mode of living current at that time, and the affirmation of a set of values—or an attempted set of values—different from that which prevailed in society as a whole. The same thing can be said about the Bohemian dress of many eras.

Now the Romantic dress and the Romantic



"The awful '60s saw the emergence of the

Whether Romanticism is a small and temporary phenomenon of no more than curiosity

And yet an alternative world is very much what we Romantics create. Let us call it rather "a world apart" and then we will not bore ourselves with threadbare '60s clichés. The Romantics do not watch television nor listen to modern "pop" music, but many of them are quite dotty about what they call "hot" or "jinky" music. This is the dance music of the '20s and '30s. Craze for a particular singer or band sweep the Romantic world in waves of enthusiasm. We have our own wireless station, which we call the Imperial Home

The building of a world is one of the favourite types of Romantic game. Many Romantics enjoy turning the drawing room into a club, setting up a bar, with the maidservant acting

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**THE MOST SUCCESSFUL NOVELTY OF THE SEASON.**  
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as waitress and every one paying for drinks in real money—pounds, shillings and pence. Or they may give cinema performances for their friends, showing pre-war films on a video-tape machine, and sometimes using a screen projector and making elaborate posters.

The lines between life, game and theatre can often be thin. The institution of voluntary bonded service, for example, under which Romantics keep their servants, is often regarded by the outside world as a sort of game; and yet it is in practice as real as any other form of service, or any other job. Romantics understand that ideas and fantasies are the subtle stuff of the world, and that the modern world itself, in all its pomp and lack of splendour, is only the outworking of a temporarily successful fantasy.

So far, we have been speaking of Romantics as a whole, most of whom, if we accept the notion of Romantics as Bohemian, are not quite as Bohemian as my cousin and myself. That is to say, most of them dress in a style that would not look entirely out of place on a modern street, even though they would actually *consider* themselves out of place on a modern street. Most of them, also—though not all—would convey more the Art Deco style of the '20s and '30s than the Victorian style of Miss Tyrrell and myself.

So what of the Victorian Romantics? What do we mean when we say that we are Victorians? Well, first of all, as I indicated earlier, we do not accept every aspect of the Victorian ethos. Its utilitarianism and vulgarity, for example, are not aspects that we have any wish to emulate. No. Victorianism is for us, before anything else, and at the risk of sounding superficial, a style of dress. Of course, that is *not* quite as superficial as it sounds, because as we have already discussed, dress is the outward expression of a set of values. Victorian dress, and in particular the dress of the early- to mid-Victorian period, which we affect, symbolises, perhaps

a greater solidity, a greater formality and a more serious attachment to tradition than that of the '20s and '30s. A Victorian Romantic is supposed to be somewhat more sober and serious than her Pippsie colleague, but that is not always the case. There are jinky Victorians—there were in Victorian times and there are now.

A lot is sometimes made in Romantic circles of the difference between the Arcadians—as we Victorians and Edwardians are termed—and the Pipsies—which is the name given to the Art Deco Romantics. Sometimes it is pretended that there is a sort of friendly civil war between the two camps. Actually this is not true. Victorians listen to the Home Service and even help to make it. Victorians sometimes listen to "hot" music, though of course they do not fox-trot. Pipsies, while superficially less formal, have their own standards of etiquette and behaviour, and certainly do not have any truck with some of the looser behaviour of the '20s and '30s. If Arcadians disapprove of Pipsies, it is really all part of the game. The Pipsies would be so disappointed if they were not occasionally disapproved of.

Being Victorian does make a difference to the way we live. For example, we do not use electrical lighting. If anything, I think being Victorian symbolises a deeper level of withdrawal from the modern world. It would be hard, I think, to be Victorian in a city, which is perhaps why most city Romantics are Pipsies. I am interested, however, to find how many young people are drawn to Victorianism. More than one child of fifteen and sixteen has written to tell us how they use only oil lamps or candles in their own rooms at home.

Victorianism has a solidity and a delicacy, a warmth and a romance, which I think is vital to all Romantics. 1930s clothes and music are very attractive, of course, but I think one would have to be a little cold at heart to live for long in a wholly Art Deco drawing room. Some one said on the Home Service recently: "all Romantics have Victorian hearts". We, who have removed ourselves rather more decisively from the modern world than most Romantics, have perhaps set ourselves the task of creating the Victorian heart of the Movement.

Victorian, that is, in the best sense. Not, we sincerely hope, vulgar or materialistic, but solid and delicate, kind and warm, elegant and steadfast.

It is a high aim that we have set ourselves, and no doubt we will always fall short of it. But it is something worth striving for; and to have something worth striving for and to strive for it are surely the most important things in this life.

# The Concise Pippsie Dictionary

by Miss Caroline Scott-Robinson

SOME time ago, a London evening paper attempted an article on Romantic talk. Being written by an outsider it was not unduly accurate. Here we set ourselves the slightly more modest aim of providing a guide to the language of the Pippsie element, who are by far the most fecund in coining new usages. We do not include the various locutions which should be familiar or obvious to, if not used by, the modern speaker—*corning*, *ripping*, *topping*, *pip-pip*, *miffed*, *chapette*, *bounder* etc. nor obvious abbreviations such as *sitch* or *grammie*. Nor will we go into such specialist areas as the *ugger* slang which surfaces from time to time. We do not claim this little dictionary to be anything like comprehensive, but it should provide a useful introduction to the Pippsie language.

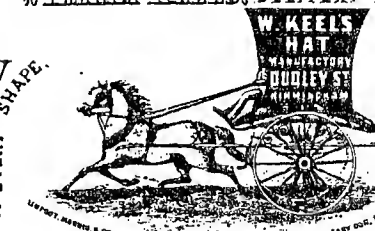
**ADULT** (adj.): 1. Often used in exactly the same way as *Grown-up* (q.v.), in deliberate contrast to the way most people use it. "They would not like us, they are very adult". **BONGO** (adj.): Inauthentic, modern; e.g. *bongo money* (fp.), *bongo counties*, *bongo weights* and *measures* (sometimes called *millibongos*, *kilobongos* etc.). Perh. inf. by *bumco*.

**BOXER** (n.): literally some one who watches television. More generally, some one who has the attitudes and outlook on life inculcated by television. Such a person is "boxed" (q.v.). **BOXED** (adj.): See above. "the people here used to be a true peasantry, but now they have been boxed"; "Awful people. Yes, they do come from a good family. Boxed gentry, I fear". **BENDY** (n.): a modern long-playing record (as opposed to a 78).

**BIRD** (n.): A man. Never a girl. **BLOT** (v.i.): To go or arrive somewhere. We are just blotting off to Poppy's"; "We were just talking of her when she blotted in". The term seems to come from backgammon where a blot is an exposed piece, thus to blot is to occupy or go to a place. A blot can also mean an undesirable person.

**CHIN** (expressh.): For some unfathomable reason, the chin is taken to be the organ of mendacity among certain Romantics. Any mention of the chin indicates either that one does not believe something, or that one's remarks are to be taken in the opposite to their apparent sense. For example, "I'd better take that on the chin" means "I do not believe

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it." Touching the chin while speaking can indicate that one means the opposite of what one is saying. More rarely, the shoulder serves the same function. **CUSHION** (expressh.): See striped cushion. **CONTAGIOUS** (adj.): Rotter-ish (q.v.) **COZEN** (v.t.): To cheat. Often used where a type might say "rip off". **CRIMP** (n.): A hindrance or annoyance: "It doesn't work; what a beastly crimp." **CRINNIED** (adj.): often *crinnied* up: literally, dressed in a crinoline dress; figuratively, elaborately dressed up. We have heard a Pippsie refer to a man in full evening dress as "crinnied up in white tie." **DARKIE** (simile): While not quite as universal as *striped cushion* (q.v.), *darkie* is a very wide-ranging simile. One can *dance* like a *darkie*, *sleep* like a *darkie*, *eat* like a *darkie*, *laugh* etc. **DOCKER** (n.): A vulgar person. (perh. a modernisation of the older (and, in our view, preferable) *bargee*).

**DOLLY** (adj.): 1. Not real, not serious. "A dolly smack" would not hurt; "dolly poker" refers to a game played for very low stakes; one who claims to reject the modern world and yet watches television might be called "a dolly traditionalist". Likewise there are "dolly Romantics". We recall some one speaking of certain modern people "returning to Victorian values" and receiving the reply "yes, but only dolly ones."

2: (of a girl) Affected, posed, stilted. This is a compliment. At the extreme of dolly behaviour, there is a fashion for quite marionettish mannerisms. See "The Adventure of the Singing Doll" by Miss Priscilla Langridge. The term can be used of a man, but with a conscious (though inoffensive) sense of rôle-reversal. **DOLLY** (n.): An affected or marionettish girl, **DOLLY** (v.t.): usu. "dolly up"—this is related to the first sense of the noun and means to conjure, fake, or produce quickly, usually with some cutting of corners. "We dollyed the drawing room into a club bar"; "I had nothing to wear, but my maid thought we could dolly up something from my old black



dress and some lace from the attic"; "he can dolly up anything from a few old bits of wood and nails."

**EXCLAMATIONS:** Pipsiedom is renowned for its varied and wonderful exclamations, both archaic and new. There are far too many to list here, and new ones appear almost weekly. "Golliwogs!" and "Applestrudel!" are well known. "My hat!", "Goodnight!" and "How do you do!" are revivals. References to giddy aunts, aunts with outlandish names ("Oh, my aunt Melitabel!"), drunken godfathers, hypnotic rabbits (!), talking goldfish and other prodigies abound. We have heard the expression "Stripped pine!" used as a cuss-word.

**FLOUR-BAGS (n.):** jeans.

**FLOUR-BAGGING (n.):** denim.

**GARGOYLE (n.):** A modernist—especially a modern "intellectual" or proponent of some modern theory of life. Possibly from the old Oxford Romantic joke that Oxford colleges have gargoyles without and gargoyles within.

**GREEN (adj.):** (also purple) occasionally used to intensify another expression, as in "galloping green golliwogs". Incongruity of colour is much prized: "he was running down the street like a green darkie" (i.e. running hard).

**GROOSHY (adj.):** Oozily modern; californian with a small 'c'.

**GROWN-UP (adj. or n.):** Dull, overly sensible, unable to join in Romantic games. The ultimate grown-up is a real worlder (q.v.), but the term may sometimes be applied to the more Victorian sort of Romantic who does not jink enough. The two uses are rather different. A real worlder is despised as being boring and philosophically unsound. A Romantic grown-up is, on the whole (and despite what the Pipsie may actually say), treasured as providing both a foil and an element of solidity to the Pipsie world. "To be strongly disapproved of for the wrong reasons is amusing. To be mildly disapproved of for the right reasons is salutary." A Grown-up is likely to be three under (q.v.), but may not necessarily be so.

**HABITATTY (adj.):** Ghastly in a way reminiscent of the style promulgated by a chain of shops called *Habitat*: "The inside of the house made one shudder; it was positively habitatty"; "the plant-pots could have been nice, but somehow they failed and just looked habitatty." Habitatty is a sub-division of Grooshy.

**HIPPIE (n.):** A term of very wide application, referring to any one who is scruffily unconventional; also virtually all people interested in natural farming, craft revival, traditional medicine, folk music etc. It is possible to pursue these subjects in a way that is not hippie, but hardly any one does it (many Romantics actually sympathise with these causes while

deploring their modern proponents: "We need real peasants, real craftsmen, not loose-mouthed, modern hippies"). In the country, apart from Romantics and the very grand (and the latter are not always exceptions), almost every one is a boxer (q.v.) or a hippie.

**IDIOT (n.):** One holding strong modernist opinions: e.g. a feminist, Socialist, defender of Modern Art, pop "music" etc.: "No point talking to them, they are all idiots."

**I SAY (expres.):** Has its normal meaning, of course, but see You don't say.

**JAZZ (n.):** Any kind of lively popular music. Bing Crosby, the Savoy Orpheans, even Vera Lynne all count as jazz, though obviously not Gilbert and Sullivan or Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy.

**JAZZ (v.i.):** To enjoy jazz as defined above, to dance to jazz, to play it on gramophone or wireless; "they are jazzing at Mimsy's house". Sometimes "jazz up".

**JIGGER (v.t.):** To confound: "That should jigger them"; "Well, I'm jiggered."

**JINK (n.):** A lark, a jolly time: "he is always game for a jink"; "we always have topping jinks when we go there".

**JINK (v.i.):** To have a jolly time, to get up to pranks, sometimes to jazz (q.v.)

**JINK (v.t.):** usu. "jink up"—to enliven: "this record always jinks up a party"; "we just thought we would jink things up a bit"; "a spot of brandy will jink up a tired syllabus". We have even heard a Pipsie say to her maid:—"jink up the fire a bit, would you?"

**JINKY (adj.):** jolly, lively, exciting.

**MERCHANT (n.):** 1. Any one who does anything. A sweep might be called "the chimney merchant"; any one interested in anything—one might say that some one is "a chess merchant" or a "film merchant" in the sort of circumstances in which a type would say that he was "into" chess or films. Wallah is used in the same way.

2. Any person: "Who are those merchants over there?"; "Hello you merchants." Wallah may be used here also.

**NATIVE (n.):** Any one who is not in any sense a Romantic. The term, surprisingly, is not usually pejorative, but quite neutral.

**ONE OF OURS (expres.):** A Romantic, a sound chap. This expression and the following one come from the frequent wartime comments on passing aeroplanes.

**ONE OF THEIRS (expres.):** A modernist.

**PIFFED (v.):** Same as miffed.

**PLIP (v.i.):** Same as blot (q.v.).

**REAL WORLDER (n.):** One who may or may not talk about "the real world" (meaning that the modern world has a special validity due to its size and power) or about "reality" (as in "Romantics are a million miles from



reality") but who certainly believes in the existence of these things; in fact, a grown-up (q.v.) of the most boring kind. The Romantic questions the very existence of this supposed "real world" or "reality". There are many "worlds"—universities, clubs, factories, stock exchanges etc., all different and most referring to the various worlds outside them collectively as "the real world". If the term has any general meaning, it refers to that view of the world foisted upon the natives by the small, unrepresentative cliques who control the broadcasting services. Real worldism is a half-baked illusion held by second-rate minds which have never taken the trouble to analyse what they mean by it. If they had done so, the concept would have fallen apart long ago.

**ROTTER (n.):** this word has its usual sense, but also a more technical one. A rotter is particularly an unchaste person; one who usurps the privileges of the married state without having entered into it; especially one who is open or unashamed about his behaviour (many Pipsies feel that some one else's immorality is no business of theirs, provided it is discreet, but that the ugly, complacent, casual blatancy with which it is assumed to be acceptable places the insensitive modern perpetrator outside the pale): "no one decent has anything to do with them—they are practising rotters."

**SEPTICS, THE (n.):** The 1970s ("the Septic '70s").

**SHOULDER (expres.):** See chin.

**STINKER (n.):** Less usual than rotter (q.v.) but meaning the same.

**STINKERS, THE (n.):** The 1960s ("the Stinking '60s").

**STRIPED CUSHION (simile):** This is the Universal Simile, and is considered, especially in sillier moods, extremely hilarious. One may be "as ill as a striped cushion", "as clever as a striped cushion", "as frightened as a striped cushion" or anything else. Occasionally it is just a cushion and sometimes, just for additional merriment, the pattern may be varied; e.g. a spotted cushion or a tartan cu-

shion. It is this sort of humour which separates the human race into its two fundamental Divisions: those who cannot live another moment without getting into Pipsie company and those who cross the street when they see a group of Pipsies coming (or even earlier—when they hear them coming).

**THREE UNDER (or -OVER):** These expressions derive from the notion that there is a normal and proper level of sobriety in mankind which lies about midway between stone-cold and stinko. This should require no artificial stimulant to produce;—it is simply the normal state of waking consciousness. Some one who is three under is a dour individual who requires three moderately stiff drinks to bring him up to the normal level. Some one who is three over is a dippy-doo who is pretty squiffy at all times before imbibing a drop. Three is the normal number, but this may be varied to moderate or intensify the statement.

**TROGLODYTE (n.):** sometimes trog—A modernist of the Caliban variety; one opposed to wealth, beauty or elegance; aggressive feminists, loutish young businessmen, lower-class young Socialists, modern biographers etc. All the ugly, stunted little creatures who destroy or rant against everything higher, finer or nobler than themselves.

**TYPE (n.):** A person conforming to any modern type: e.g. a scruffy student, a lout, a "pop" listener, a left-winger, a vulgar tripper, a feminist, a food-faddist, a Laura Ashleyette, a rotter (q.v.) etc. Since many modern people conform to one type or another, the word may seem equivalent to native (q.v.) and is sometimes wrongly used as if it were. Not all natives are types. Type is pejorative, native is not. However, type can be used jocularly of one's own people, as in "I say, you types!"

**WALLAH (n.):** See merchant.

**YOU DON'T SAY (expres.):** "You have just uttered a ridiculous modern cliché". Often said to amuse other Pipsies when talking to an idiot (q.v.). It can be applied to expressions ("rip-off", "hassle", etc.) or to opinions:

**Idiot (q.v.):** "No one would wish to revive the British Empire."

**Pipsie (in tone of respectful innocence):** "You don't say!"

Perhaps the sense is: "You do not say: your conditioning is talking through you." The third-person form (perhaps more usual) is "I say". The Romantic who has some occasion to read a newspaper article to friends can reduce them to helpless laughter with the judicious interspersions of I says in cleverly calculated tones of voice. A wireless interview or news broadcast heard in a public place can similarly be rendered hilarious.



# The Romantic Interior



First Principles by Vögelchen

MUCH can be learned of a household by the way it is decorated. It may be an exaggeration to say that *everything* of importance can be so learned, but not a vast one.

It is so important that even the natives have noticed it. They publish articles on "interior design" and give advice on one's "roomset". Of course, few Romantics would speak of "interior design" except in a spirit of extreme waggishness and "roomset" would no more pass Romantic lips than "life-style". Nonetheless, some of these pieces do contain moderately sound advice, mainly because they are infused with a new spirit of unashamedly wishing to adopt the manner of the better classes, which entails at least a certain degree of elegance, propriety and respect for the past, and at least a certain degree of disdain for democratic silliness (I should pause to explain that "democratic", in this sense, is used by Romantics almost as a technical term relating to the decoration of a house and to other aesthetic questions. Stripped pine and Habitatism are the most extreme examples of democratic furnishing).

So, since all those other chaps are up and at it, perhaps we should contribute a few notes about the Romantic style. Actually, there are several Romantic styles and some Romantics invent their own, but these general notions apply.

**The Hall:** We have read somewhere that the hall for the "Sloane" or the upward-aspiring native should be "messy, welcoming and functional" rather than grand and impressive. It should be littered with green Wellington boots, the dirtier the better, and other debris.

This is one area where the Romantic style is in utter opposition to the modern post-patrician notion. Functionality and mess of this particular sort reeks of the modern servant-less house. The Romantic may not have servants, but one does not want one's house to

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look ostentatiously servantless. Ostentatiously poor, well, perhaps, if poverty is so acute that the only course is to make an affectation of it. Ostentatiously *servantless*, never.

Romantics, in any case, are not Wellington-boot people, and green wellies are a touch post-war for one's liking. If one *must* have wellies, they are probably black, and if one has no one to clean them and put them away, one at least flings them into the obscurity of an under-stairs cupboard.

The hall *should* be grand and imposing if it can. Romantics do not like democratic chumminess of style. It can be cluttered—with hall tables, stuffed animals, things under glass domes, hall stands, walking canes and so forth. If there are insufficient servants, it may have a "not dusted for centuries" appearance. This is not *ideal*, but it is *acceptable*. The Romantic house *should* be immaculate in its chosen style, but that is counsel of perfection; the real point is that if mess is unavoidable, one must have the right *kind* of mess. One may be dusty and disorganised, but never messy and functional.

**The Privy:** One never calls this "the loo"—a hopeless pimminism, almost as unacceptable as "toilet". One may call it the lavatory or the privy or the bathroom (even if there is no bath in it). One may refer to it obliquely (speaking of "the geography of the house" or of "going to wash one's hands");—Arcadians do this out of real delicacy, while some Pipsies delight in elaborate circumlocutions from sheer jinkery.

The thing itself must have a proper high cistern with a chain, and a wooden seat. Whether this is in some fancy Victorian design, or Art Deco-ish, or just nondescript, quite optional. A ceramic or some other

of seat would be acceptable, but never any sort of plastic. Obviously colour-matched modern "bathroom suites" (ugh!) are out. I was about to say that the ceramic should be no colour except white, but that is not quite true. Black Art Deco, for example, or pink, Hollywood-style shell-shaped baths and handbasins are quite possible to some Romantics—others consider them revolting, but not a gaffe in the way that a handle-flush or an avocado "bathroom suite" would be.

Paper, according to the purist, should be Izal or Bronco, on a metal or wooden roll-holder, or ceramic box-holder, or perhaps a chintz-lined basket. Softer rolls are known. Be careful of colour, though.

One does not have a sauna, of course, and certainly not a jacuzzi. One is not entirely sure what a sauna is, far less the other thing. One may be told that one is quite traditional in Scandinavia and the other was used by the ancient Romans. They are rather like Perrier water, really:—no doubt it has refreshed people for centuries and will be refreshing them in a thousand years' time; but at this particular point in history, no decent person can partake of it because of the cringe-making company it keeps.

Please do not assume from this that Romantics are opposed to luxury *per se*. On the contrary, some Romantics positively luxuriate in the sort of luxuries which offend the ingrained Puritanism of the modern mind—from sleeping in silken sheets to ringing for a servant to light one's cigarette (this latter, by the bye, is a splendid way of amusing a leftie visitor, and well worth a shot even if one does not normally smoke)—but the ill-making, loose-faced, modern, transatlantic style of luxury represented by saunas and jacuzzis is something one would not touch with an Oxford punt-pole.

One does not have a shower unless it is in an Edwardian shower cabinet or something Art Deco. Not every one approves even of these.

The rest of the room is plain and is more distinguished by what there is not than by what there is. Privies should not be democratised, trivialised or brought out into the open in any way. They should be *privy*. There are no books or magazines of any sort. No pictures or photographs on the walls. No humorous touches. If one does read in the bath (allowing the phrase "in the bath" its widest possible interpretation), the book will be tucked away in a box or cabinet along with any plastic toothbrushes and modern toothpaste tubes.

Hair shampoos, bubble baths, etc. (oh, yes, we *do* have bubble baths) will, of course, have been decanted where necessary into glass containers. Exotic and old-fashioned looking

toiletary preparations in interesting bottles are often favoured, but beware of the twee and the ecologically-natural. The old pharmacy *miroir*, not the Laura-Ashley-cum-earth-mother *miroir* is what is desired.

We have not, so far moved into the House Proper, but the hall and the bathroom are crucial. If the hall is sound *and* the bathroom is sound, then you are almost certainly on Romantic territory. The hall and the bathroom separate the doves from the pigeons; the Romantics from the near misses. Lots of people have sound drawing rooms; only a handful combine them with sound bathrooms.

Many canons, however, are common to all people of taste. No Romantic, for example, has fitted carpets. Few would have central heating—and never *instead* of open fires. Art Deco gas fires are just possible for arch-interbelligerents. Picture windows, of course, are only for barbarians.

Floorboards are *not* stripped or strewn with rugs (rugs are acceptable, but do not substitute for a carpet). Carpets should be Victorian or Oriental, even if they have to be threadbare. Good reproductions are possible. Romantics are rarely afraid of good reproductions of anything.

Lighting should, it is often thought, ideally be candles and oil lamps, with gas lighting a close-ish second. Many Romantics are strongly of this opinion, but some have electrical lighting from real preference rather than *faute de mieux* convenience. Strip lighting of any sort, anywhere, is obviously beyond the pale, as are spotlights. Tiffany lamps, Art Deco fittings and old-fashioned standard lamps are all possible.

This is really a separate subject in itself, but Romantic Art Deco is always on the stylish and theatrical side of the *genre*, rather than the stark and functional side. A tubular steel standard lamp, for example, however authentically Art Deco, and however much it might fetch at Sothebys, would never find a place in a Romantic house. Neither would a single-panelled door, or that beastly, pale, thin bent-wood furniture, nor a hundred other things that express the bleak, democratic aspect of Art Deco.



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The London preparation has been sold for the use of the Oil, and recommended to all hairdressers as being the best and most effective and restorative of the hair. This is a golden rule for hair. Bottles: 3s. 6d., 7s. 6d., 10s. 6d., equal to 2 oz.



# Bonded Service

Miss Hester St. John explains a cardinal feature of Romantic life

NOT long ago I visited an old school friend who now lives in a charming seventeenth-century house in the country which has been for generations in her husband's family. She greeted me with considerable warmth, showed me into her drawing room, and then left for some time. She returned with a splendid tea-tray. She then had to leave for some other thing and came back full of apologies for all that she had to do and said that entertaining seemed to her very difficult. I remarked that it is hard to conduct civilised life without servants. She sighed deeply and said in the most heartfelt tone: "No. It is impossible."

My heart went out to her, and I wanted there and then to introduce her to bonded service; but I looked at the television set, remembered the glossy magazines in the bathroom, one of which had some vile word on the cover, and realised that it was not possible. She was a very charming woman, and her house little touched by modern unpleasantness, being furnished largely as it was furnished a hundred years ago; nonetheless, she was too much a part of the modern world to undertake the sacred trust of bonded service.

But let me tell you a little of my experience of this institution. I have two maidservants; the senior of the two is almost a housekeeper, but she is not quite that, being rather young and still requiring much guidance. She has been with me for several years, and will probably stay with me for life. The junior maid has been with me for only six months or so. Her position has been filled by three other girls in the past. She may stay, if she settles well and we get on with her, or she may move on to another position, or leave service altogether. Neither of them receives any wage, though they are supported and sometimes given pocket money. They do not regard their service as a "job" in the modern sense of that term.

Quite how we do regard their service is perhaps a little difficult for the modern mind to understand, and it is the purpose of this essay to explain it. The *bond* which exists between the bonded servant and her mistress (and is the reason why her service is termed *bonded service*) is not one of cash. It is more like a Feudal allegiance. She gives her fealty and her service to her mistress, and her mistress in return gives her protection, guidance and livelihood.

If this seem strange to my reader, it is important to place it in its historical perspective. In almost every historical period, from the earliest times until well into the present century, a very large proportion of the population of every sort of society were involved in personal service, either as servant or as master or mistress. Every one down to the small farmer's wife would expect to have at least one servant; more prosperous families would have had more, and this was as true in 1914 B.C. as it was in 1914 A.D., or in



any year in between. In most times cash has not been the sole basis of such service. Until quite recently great families had servants who were more or less hereditary. The BIBLE says: "Neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant or his maidservant..." implying a sense of closeness and ownership far greater than that between the modern "employer" and his "employee". Such bonds are natural to human life, and the position of affairs prevailing over the last few decades, in which personal service has been destroyed by deliberate taxation policy, is, like most aspects of the modern world, unnatural and harmful. Thousands of girls, who should be protected by their mistresses, are simply left to fend for themselves, to become "unmarried mothers" as the unlovely euphemism has it, and to ruin their own lives and those of their children.

The doctrine that all people are equal, and that all must therefore be independent and fend for themselves in the jungle of the modern world is not only false in theory, it is, in practice, cruel; and cruel most especially to the weakest and least capable, who stand most in need of protection.

The bond between mistress and servant is one of the more important forms of human relation that have been lost in this half-century, making the world a colder and less hu-

man place. Certainly this bond was sometimes corrupted, or did not exist at all, when the cash relationship began to supersede human values in the 18th and 19th centuries; but this was more the case among middle-class *parvenus* than the traditional families, whether of the nobility, the squirearchy or the yeomanry.

Personal service has its roots in human nature itself, and in the benign and fundamental inequality which divides the race into different types, each with his proper function to fulfil;—a permanent reality of the human condition which egalitarian ideology can never eradicate, but only corrupt. A return to personal service is a return to healthy normality. It is little wonder, then, that there is at least a minority of girls who are pleased to return to the sanctuary of bonded service from the chaos of the modern world.

Yet such service imposes duties upon the mistress. She must *provide* a sanctuary from the modern world. She cannot set herself up as a mistress and then toy with the values of a world which is the antithesis of all that she must represent. It is important to understand that the mistress is just as "bonded" as her servant. Both of them have rejected the illusory "freedom" of the modern world, which is in fact slavery to the empty, unphilosophical dictates of the capitalist economy. This, however, by no means implies that every bonded mistress is a strict Victorian. Far from it! Some of the jinkiest Pipsies, with their "hot" dance music and their bobbed hair, have bonded maidservants. But they *do* reject the values of the modern world, its "music", its "media", its "morality" and all its other monstrosities.

Nor does a mistress have to be rich. We have even heard of bonded maidservants who were paid by the State for being "unemployed":—for certainly they were not "employed" in the sense intended by the State. We see nothing wrong in this, because it is that same State which has quite deliberately, and by acts of what can only be called systematic theft, rendered personal service all but impossible by normal means. Indeed, it is a poetic irony of the most amusing sort.

While we have said that the bonded mistress does not *have* to be rich, it has been remarked upon more than one occasion, that, whatever her financial standing, in a certain sense she is rich. We know of natives, who are really quite well off in the terms of their world, and yet, when they give a dinner party, the mistress of the house must clear the plates herself, or her husband must absent himself from the conversation in order to fetch the next course from the kitchen! To the poorest bonded mistress this seems unbearably squalid. Indeed, to any person of sensibility it seems squalid, even if she is forced to endure it. As my friend said, civilised life without servants is impossible. Thus it is that Romantics who are poor in the eyes of the world may count themselves rich, and, indeed, be rich. I recall a young lady who runs

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some small business which keeps her largely insulated from the modern world. We spoke of an acquaintance who has what is termed a "highly-powered" job and earned a great deal more than she. "But I would not change places with her," said my friend, "even if I did not have to do her dreadful job. I should have to open my own front door to callers."

Even the few natives rich enough to have servants cannot get *real* servants. They have "employees" who "knock off" at set hours, have no sense of bond, or of hierarchy and very probably call their "employers" by their first names. Visiting Romantics are embarrassed. Super-rich Americans can actually employ old Etonians as butlers, who at least understand the idea of service; but of course, they are not really servants. A few traditional families who have retained their money have also retained some form of real service; they are the only equals of the Romantic bonded mistress.

Bonded service for men is something that has not yet been looked into. Consequently I know of no man who has a bonded servant—I recall one who used to have something of the sort, but he was not really a Romantic. Servants have traditionally been a mistress's province, though, and the servantless bachelor establishment somehow does not seem so *outré* as other servantless houses.

Quite how a mistress acquires her bonded servants is something a lady comes to know when she is ready to know it. My friend, with whom we began this article, dear though she is, will probably not be ready. It is sad, but one chooses one's course. As to you, dear reader, time alone can tell.



# Pippit's PIPPSIE PAGE

NOW this, as the French so eloquently phrase it, is *un petit peu plus comme il*. No more of these quarter pages for jolly old Pippit. Of course, "Pipsie page" is just as inaccurate as ever, but this time you do not hear me complaining to the management. No one was ever sued for giving extra measures. That is the origin of the baker's dozen, you know. Never say the Pipsie Page is not educational.

So what, you ask, is the reason for this outbreak of Pip; this Pipsie imperialism; this sudden and successful coup resulting in acres of flat white *Lebensraum* for the jinky *junta* (that only alliterates out loud if you pronounce *junta* wrongly as most B.B.C. oiks do—which really is enough of the jolly old education for one day)? Did that question mark surprise you? If you pop back to the beginning of the paragraph you will see it *was* a question. [Get down to business, Pippit, there is a limit to how much space you can have and you've a big job ahead of you—ed.]

Oh, yes. So I have. So down to the dizzy old task in hand, what-what? The task in hand is to tell you types about all the latest programmes available for your wireless sets.

I call them programmes because what else can you call them? They are available on bendy records, tape cassettes or on something called a compact disc, so you can hardly call them "records" can you? Not unless you want to use the word in a rather technical and unidiomatic way, you can't, and who wants that?

Anyway, "programmes" seems so much nicer. I mean, when I think I am encouraging you chaps to invest in bendy gramophonettes I get a shooting pain or two in the conscience region. But when I realise that you can get them on those almost-tame tape-cassette widget-wodgets whereon you are already hearing the Home Service, well it is rather better, eh what? Think of them, I say, as supplementary wireless programmes and you won't go far wrong. After all, you need extra programmes don't you, now that you have heaved the old picture-box onto the village dump to keep company with all the other smellies. So, programmes it is, and without further ado [thank goodness—ed.] here come the jolly old reviews.

Oh, by the bye, the numbers I am giving you to each programme are for the cassette tape

version. If you want to order the bendy version, just lop off the first letter (so CHDL 120 becomes HDL 120). Just ask for these codes at your local record shop and the chap will know what you mean. He must be some sort of a genius.

Now we really are ready to start [oh, I do hope so—ed.]. These programmes are a mixture of the absolute latest up-to-date music, with a few older things thrown in. So let us start with something bang up to the minute:

*Futuristic Rhythm* (Halcyon Records, CHDL 117) is a programme starring a splendid new band leader by the name of Mr. Ben Pollack.

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This is an apparatus for reproducing the human voice or other sounds as often as desired; it is intended to be for the voice what photography is for the features. The gramophone bears no resemblance in a scientific aspect to the Phonograph or Graphophone. Those who have seen and heard it universally pronounce it to be a wonderful Toy.

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## PARKINS AND GOTTO, 60, OXFORD STREET, LONDON.

This chap, I can tell you, is the find of the year. His syncopated rhythms are it-and-a-half and I am sure we will be hearing a great deal more of Mr. Pollack and his music. No oldies on this programme. Everything is up-to-the-minute white-hot '20s music, and the very best at that. If you can keep your toes still during numbers like "He's the Last Word" (with an absolutely hat-popping vocal by Misses Dorothy and Hannah Williams) then you probably have fallen arches or something. Get them checked.

*Nice Work* (Saville, SVL 199) stars the splendid Mr. Fred Astaire singing songs by Mr. George Gershwin. In some of these numbers, he is accompanied by the composer himself on the piano and in the first six songs, he sings with his charming, vivacious sister, Adele. The programme divides neatly into two halves, the first full of modern super-jinky songs from our own '20s (you will love Fred and Adele singing "I'd Rather Charleston"), while the second half has slightly older pieces from the '30s. These sound smoother and fuller, but without the bold, ultra-modern superfizz of the first half. Pippit adores both styles and thinks they complement each other wonderfully in a well-balanced programme which will have endless repeats on your wireless set.

*Dixieland Shuffle* (Halcyon, CHDL 120) brings us Mr. Bob Crosby. No, that is not a misprint. You don't see many misprints in *The Romantic*, you know. Bob Crosby is Bing's brother, and he has an orchestra of his own. Exceedingly good it is, too. Splendid jinky jazz. Most of the songs have vocals by Mr. Crosby himself: he sounds at times a little like his brother, though with a voice that is "darker" and less smooth. Two songs, however have vocals by Miss Connie Boswell of the Boswell Sisters.

*It Was So Beautiful* (Halcyon, CHDL 119) is certainly going to be the programme from this selection for many of our readers. It stars none other than Miss Annette Hanshaw "The Sweetheart of the 'Twenties" as the programme calls her. The sweetheart of the Romantics, certainly. These are her last recordings, made when Miss Hanshaw was close to her retirement at the ripe old age of 23. The songs are, on the whole, a little warmer and gentler than her earlier work, and she has entirely dropped her charming "that's all" catch-phrase. Even Pippit did not previously know all the songs on this programme, and that particular Pipsie is charmed and delighted beyond words by this. No one can express with such warmth and humour the whole range of human feeling as Miss Hanshaw. She is not an actress in the sense of taking on different rôles. Everything is done in a distinctive and fetching "Annette Hanshaw" way, which her admirers have grown to love—usually after hearing their first Annette Hanshaw song.

If I have one adverse comment, it has nothing to do with the music. On the sleeve note, the writer says that Miss Hanshaw's work is "ahead of its time". "Even now," he says (he apparently lives somewhere in the late 20th century) "over half a century later, who could infuse so much pathos into 'It's

the Talk of the Town', so much tenderness into 'You'll always be the Same Sweetheart to Me' or so much joy into 'Let's Fall in Love'?" Now what on earth can the passage of time have to do with qualities such as these? Surely the maddest Darwinist does not imagine that our capacity for expressing joy or pathos is 'evolving'. Surely the looniest advocate of progress does not seriously believe that there have been 'advances' in tenderness. Do people actually think at all before they write these things? Or are they programmed into them by their television sets, to pop out whole and meaningless whenever something triggers off the "progress reflex"? Do not let this spoil what is probably the best programme on today's list. You do not have to read it!

*The Road to the Isles* (Happy Days, MCHD 148) is a very different sort of programme. Father Sydney MacEwan sings a selection of old Scottish songs. These are quite recent recordings, made in the mid-'30s. Charming, sensitive renderings of well-known songs like "Ye Banks and Braes" and "Will Ye No Come Back Again", together with some less familiar but no less replete with the wistful charm of the Celtic Twilight.

*Remembering 1927 - 34* is a collection of songs from Mr. Bing Crosby. The title is a touch deceptive, making the programme sound a little more up-to-date than it really is:—only one song is from 1927 and all the rest are slightly older recordings from the early '30s. Do not worry. This is splendid stuff. The second half of the programme in particular, features Mr. Crosby in his jinkiest mood, sounding more like a jazz singer than a crooner. In many of the songs he thrills and astounds the listener with hot "voice solos" in which he uses his voice, without words, as if it were a jazz instrument playing an improvised, virtuoso "break". Ripping jinks. The first part also includes some croony tunes for those of you who want your hearts throbbled.

*Jamboree* (Halcyon, CHDL 114) stars the spectacular Mr. Tommy Dorsey and his orchestra. Along with *Futuristic Rhythm*, this is probably the best party record of today's crop. Dancing and jinking music hot enough to fry eggs on. Not many old favourites on this one, but plenty which will soon become new favourites. If this is what bands are turning out today, no wonder the late 20th century is dead and buried.

*The Glenn Miller Orchestra 'Live' at the Glen Island Casino, Summer 1939* must surely be the longest title for a long time! This takes us back a bit, of course and how much you will like it depends on your taste for what I be-



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lieve are called 'golden old'uns'. In this programme you can hear something very rare:—you can hear the music of one decade transforming into the music of another. At the beginning of this summer season in 1939, Mr. Miller was more or less unknown. By the end, after his playing in the casino had been broadcast regularly across America, the "Glenn Miller sound" was the it-thing. These recordings still have a '30s tinge, but the smoother, slicker, more predigested sound of the '40s is beginning to take over. Much of the well-established Miller repertoire is already here: "In the Mood", "Moonlight Serenade", "Neath the Spreading Chestnut Tree", and it is interesting to hear these early renditions. For those of you who draw the line at the end of 1939, this programme is just in—in letter if not in spirit. An advantage for wireless enthusiasts is that the original American announcer is still on the programme, so you can say to your surprised friends: "I think this set will even pick up an American station." And so it will.

Tip Top Tunes (Conifer, MCHD 135) takes us back another generation again. The recordings on this programme, made by Geraldo

and his orchestra, date between the late '50s and 1946. There is a nostalgic charm in this music, but for some of us, at least, it seems a little cloying. Quite how people could have preferred this, at the time, to the music of the '30s is beyond me; but it does have a certain charm of its own, and if this is the sort of thing you like, here is a fine example of the jolly old genre.

Queen of Hearts (Happy Days, MCHD 144) is also very much a matter of taste. It is not dated, consisting, as it does, of recordings made between 1934 and '37 by Miss Gracie Fields. Some of the songs are splendid and Miss Fields's voice is very good. I must confess, however, that I am not overly fond of the Lancashire Lass, because,—well, she is too much of a Lancashire Lass for my liking. It is a foolish criticism, no doubt. No one should say beer is bad because he does not like beer. Miss Fields is becoming so well-known these days that few of you will not have heard her, so you must make up your own minds whether you like her. If you do, here are some songs, mostly on the romantic and sentimental, rather than the comic side.

Mario Lanza Live (A Touch of Magic, CATOM2) is another particularly wireless programme with the announcements still there. The backing is rather "filmy" than classical, and this fine tenor sings some splendid songs, including "Funiculi Funicula" which is so jolly (though it is in a rather odd English translation which seems to have no connexion with the funicular railway) and "The Rosary", which was so enormously popular at the turn of the century that no amateur concert was complete without it. Signor Lanza's rendition is anything but amateur.

The Music Goes Round and Round (Halcyon, CHDL 118). It is nice to save the best until last. Impossible today, because so much of what we have is so good that it is hard to say what is the best. This programme is a strong contender at any rate. It stars the inimitable Boswell Sisters, who bring us some of their latest songs, often backed by the Dorsey brothers. Oh, here is style. Here is panache. Here is immaculate perfection. Wait till you hear the Sisters singing "Top Hat, White Tie and Tails" or "I'm Putting All My Eggs in One Basket" or "Let Yourself Go". Faultless close harmony, breathtakingly inventive arrangements and sheer poise make this a programme of which you will never tire.

What an exciting time this is, with topping new programmes coming out almost as fast as Pippit can review them. Hoping this selection will keep you jinking until next time, I bid you a fond pip-pip.

# WHEN EMPIRES MEET

Miss Amabel Violet Brand's Scintillating Story Comes to Life!

TO OUR recent half-true story, "The One-room Empire" you were promised a sequel or culmination. It comes in a form you were not, perhaps, expecting! Suddenly we transpose ourselves from the realms of semi-fiction to those of recent history as we hear, in more factual form, what happened to the Monticue siblings (they really did call themselves that—at least for a time) next.

Miss Monticue's dove-hunting dinner was not an outstanding success, despite the fact that it was the culmination of some weeks of work. There came out of it some half-and-halves who tagged along on the periphery of the Olympians for a year or so. The only exception was a girl called Gillian Smith. Miss Smith had entered fully into the spirit of things. She had arranged her short hair into something approaching a bob and her lips were courageously painted in a real and vivid Cupid's-bow which ignored completely the lines that nature had given her. Her gestures were affected and she attempted to imitate the style of conversation of her host and hostess. The others were dull. They had some interest in Miss Monticue, but had no notion of giving up their own entrenched modern persona.

The aftermath of the dinner-party was one of dullness for Urquhart, but for Melinda it was of profound depression.

"You would think," she said, "that when one had found a decent type in the very house one happened to be in, it would be possible to find another in the whole of Oxford."

Urquhart pointed out that Miss Smith was decent enough. Melinda felt unsure, but Urquhart was definite. She needed a little work, perhaps, but she had potential and, above all, she had willingness. She was "One of ours." It is not often that one can trace the origin of a well-used phrase, but the phrase "one of ours" was born that night. It was based upon the familiar wartime comment made upon a passing aeroplane: "It's all right, it's one of ours!" and has passed into Romantic usage. The final judgment to be made upon any one, underlying and superseding everything else: is he "one of ours", or "one of theirs"? Miss Smith, Urquhart insisted, was one of ours. Melinda was unconvinced. "Perhaps she could be—"

She meant that with sufficient training, she might become one of ours. "Then let us invite her in," said Urquhart. "Now. No time like the present." Melinda remembers today

how he shook her out of her depression by advocating immediate action. They must take a taxi to Miss Smith's college now and bring her back. Tomorrow she might have reverted to her modern self. She must take the choice as he had taken it. Declare herself in or out.

Melinda was elated. She did not necessarily believe that the man should take all the initiative, but it was a tremendous relief to have some one else taking bold steps on behalf of the Empire—to know that her struggle against the modern world need no longer be a lonely battle in which she was the sole general.

They arrived at Miss Smith's college a few minutes before she arrived on foot, swept her into the taxi and brought her back to the house.

"It was the nearest we had ever come to abducting some one," says Urquhart.

"At that time," adds Melinda mischievously.

They talked all night. They laughed at the shallow modern-ness of the dinner party, and by breakfast-time they were bound together in bonds that the world could not shatter. Miss Smith was decidedly One of Ours.

This was something; but it seemed for a time to be a dead end. The Empire had gone as far as it could, which was not very far. Melinda had cultivated every one she could find who had looked remotely possible, and all but one had turned out to be as remote as they looked. The three spent much of their time together and Melinda's cultivation of promising outsiders, while it did not entirely cease, became a half-hearted and sporadic affair. Miss Smith, who had adopted her '20s style for the evening, began to cultivate it as a permanent thing and the affectation of her manner became increasingly exaggerated as it became clear to her that far from scorning it, the others liked her better the more affected she became. She could not be persuaded to make her name Psmith, despite Urquhart's repeated attempts. Urquhart always felt that there was something rather bourgeois about using the name one was born with unless it was a particularly grand name, but Miss Smith felt that there was something essential in her family name and wished to keep it unchanged for the time being at least.

And so things might have continued, had it not been for Miss Genevieve Falconer. Miss Falconer discovered the Celestial Empire one day as it was making a foray, in full force, to



that far corner of the Covered Market where they sell potable teas and coffees. Miss Falconer was at that time about ten years older than the three. Come to think of it, I suppose she still is, though it does not seem quite polite to say so. She was wearing a striking coat and skirt in a bold diagonal stripe of cream and brown tweed which breathed the very spirit of Art Deco. Her hat was small and soft, falling studiously to one side, and her immaculately cut hair fell in a straight-edged swathe over one eye as if she had been trying to hide a scar, although she was not trying to hide anything. There could hardly have been a more daunting person than Miss Falconer to approach in cold blood in a public place. Her firm, posed lips, her intelligent, mocking eyes and every inch of her tall, easily-erect posture bespoke a mild disdain of the modern world about her which was mild only because she chose to notice it merely at the periphery of her consciousness. Yet it was, of course, for this very reason that Miss Monticue imperatively must speak to her. Perhaps this startling creature did not even live in Oxford. She had certainly never seen her before. This might be her only chance. The worst she had to fear was an expert snub (Miss Falconer certainly looked like an expert snubber, as, indeed, she is). If she was One of Theirs, her opinion counted for nothing. If she was One of Ours and did not understand, or understood but did not care, then one had but tried.

"Would you mind taking a quick wander," she said to the others. "Meet me in five or ten ticks." She had determined to brave the snub, but not in front of her troops.

Her approach to Miss Falconer was simple and direct. There seemed really no other way to go about it. She put on her best Edwardian manner:—"Forgive me, madam: we have not met, but I feel that we ought to know one another. My name is Miss Monticue."

While Miss Falconer looked the most daunting of people to approach, and, with the wrong sort of approach or the wrong sort of person, certainly was exactly that, Miss Monticue could not have introduced herself in this way to a better or more amiable subject. No look of surprise moved her pencilled eyebrows by the smallest fraction of an inch. Her smile was restrained and half-humorous, but contained a certain warmth.

"You do me an honour, Miss Monticue. I am Miss Falconer."

Miss Falconer did not stop to talk at this time, but gave Miss Monticue her card and advised her that she would be at home that afternoon.

The Grand Imperial Committee was convened over coffee at the County Hotel. Miss

Monticue did not need to tell her audience what she had done, for they had guessed that at once. Nor did they suppose that she had been unsuccessful, for then the whole matter would have gone tactfully unmentioned by all parties. The only question was the extent of her success and the well-or-otherwise-foundedness of her obvious optimism. Miss Falconer, they agreed, would be the find of the decade, if only she turned out to be real. Miss Monticue declared that she had seemed perfectly real to her, and showed the engraved card that she had been given. How many people—even the "best" people—carried proper cards today?



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Of course she might be an actress of some sort, and, little as the Imperialists knew or cared to know of the modern world and its ways, they harboured dark suspicions that a Modern Person could take on all sorts of seductive forms, rather like the Devil. They knew by instinct that some one could dress perfectly and speak enchantingly and still be a slicky post-Freudian rotter under the skin. Urquhart mentioned some academic with the most exquisitely traditional theories of aesthetics. He had admired him this side of idolatry until he found a novel the chap had written which was just oozing with sickly modernness and made one feel quite ill.

If she was real, Miss Smith tentatively suggested, she did not seem like the sort of person who could be absorbed into the Empire. Might she not consider them, well, a bit little? Urquhart agreed. Might it not be they who were absorbed into her Empire? Miss Monticue said that if Miss Falconer's Empire was as real and as good as it promised to be, then she was prepared to consider the possibility of unconditional surrender. She did not say, though she now admits, that she privately thought, that if such a thing were really possible, she would welcome it.

The doubt over Miss Falconer's *bona fides* persisted in Miss Monticue's mind for perhaps two minutes and a half after she had knocked on the door of her house in North Oxford. The door was opened by a rather imposing parlour-maid in black uniform with

the crispest of white aprons and an equally crisp white cap with long streamers. "There is a lady to see you, ma'am," she announced.

Miss Monticue was delighted at being announced in this way, but she was not yet conscious of the signal honour which it implied. More than one scion of the older and prouder families of the land had been announced by this maid as "a person". No doubt they attributed it to the ignorance of the servant;—perhaps to some naïve and *passé* assumption that a gentleman must come in a silk hat, and an inability to distinguish class and quality beneath the surface of casual modern dress. In fact, she was acting quite consciously upon her mistress's express dictum that no one who wears jeans or a tee-shirt, or who listens to modern "pop" music may be considered a gentleman. "Clothes may not make the gentleman," ran a noted Falconerism, "but they can certainly unmake him."

Over tea, Miss Falconer did not allude to the curious way in which they had met. Instead she discussed books and history, people and things; gauging all the time Miss Monticue's soundness and quietly indicating her own. Miss Monticue told her about the Celestial Empire, not in a silly, capitulating, outward way, but just as she had told it to Urquhart:—her being a real Edwardian and not fully incarnate and everything. It took some courage to do this, but she had gathered by now that whimsy was not alien to Miss Falconer and that that lady would take more pleasure in their acquaintance if Miss Monticue brought something of her own to the game rather than simply following Miss Falconer's lead. Whatever degree of surrender Miss Falconer desired, Miss Monticue was more than willing to give, but complete and unconditional surrender suddenly seemed rather selfish—rather like taking everything and giving nothing in return. Miss Falconer's world, she guessed, was larger than her own, but still not so large that it could not benefit from another country within it, another magic island to explore, and a new language and people to add to its richness.

Over the next few weeks, Miss Monticue and her two friends were introduced into Miss Falconer's world. First her house itself. It was a curious mixture of Art Deco and Victorian, as indeed, many houses in the '30s must have been. It was the fundamentals of the house—carpets, most of the furniture, the larger pictures and so on—which were Victorian, while Art Deco expressed itself in knick-knacks and oddities, often the most eye-catching things, such as a notable black standard-lamp or the black-glass and looking-glass fire-screen. It was expressive, Miss

Monticue later suggested, of Miss Falconer herself:—her sleek, modern (i.e. '30s) exterior and her much more traditional heart; the cold, crisp, immaculate surface she presented to the world and the warmth, kindness and even sentimentality which governed her relations with those within the charmed circle. There were curiosities, too, such as the crinoline doll which concealed her telephone and which fascinated Miss Monticue because it provided the starting-point for so many reflexions which deepened her understanding of the Romantic taste. Such dolls were expressly made for this purpose in the '30s, and no doubt must have been regarded at the time as being of highly questionable taste. There was something in the possession of such an article which implied a certain gentle nose-thumbing at the pretentious anti-sentimentalism of modernism (both '30s and '80s). It was something which existed in the borderlands of taste: it said "I am not a sophisticate. I have this because it is sweet." It would be easy to imagine that it had been placed there in inverted commas, but Miss Monticue saw at once that it had not, and saw also the distinction between this and the attempts to be funny or contemporary or mockingly twee that modern people affect as "counterpoint" to a period setting. She knew that Miss Falconer would write off the owners of such things without further thought.

Another interesting thing about this telephone cover was the telephone beneath it, which was a very nice early candlestick model; as if its owner were saying:—"I have bought this machine because it was the only one possible, but I still think I had better hide it beneath something which is a soft and sentimental rendition of the demure and the traditional"; and how did that tally with the black-glass and looking-glass fire-screen?

Again, the crinoline doll was a first indication of that whimsy and childlike sense of fun which was never as far as it looked from the surface of Miss Falconer's being, and which could lead on, much to the surprise of those who did not know her well, to high-jinks and schemes of the wildest order. This side of her character was to find full and exuberant expression a few years later at St. Bride's.

Then there was the staff. Miss Falconer kept a staff of three: cook-housekeeper, parlour-maid and maid-of-all-work. This, of course, was unheard of in what was, after, all quite a modest establishment in the latter quarter of the twentieth-century. The parlour-maid was also lady's maid and thus, socially, the highest of the servants, though not



in charge of the others. She was quite as prim as she had seemed on first meeting. As Miss Falconer once rather impishly said:—"I do only my really serious snubbing myself. Every day snubbing is looked after by Miss Hunt." Miss Hunt judged every lady by the standards of her mistress, which meant that she looked upon most specimens of modern womanhood down the full length of her thin, straight nose. However, any lady or gentleman fully accepted by Miss Falconer received from her a warmth of subservience which made them value themselves, perhaps for the first time, to the full. This also was a part of the Falconer strategy. Making the right sort value themselves and realise their utter superiority to the fatuous chaos about them was, in fact, far more important than the putting of types in their place.

The cook-housekeeper, Mrs. Mannon (the Mrs. was a courtesy title) was really a treasure. She said things like "lawks-a-mussy" and "strike me pink", presumably as pure affectation, since no one says such things naturally these days; but the affectation had been so long practised (she used both phrases along with some others of like vintage several times each day) that it was now quite unconscious. She cooked well, managed the house excellently, managed all sorts of affairs that no one might at first have suspected and amused everyone. She was about twenty-four. Had she not belonged to Miss Falconer she might have occupied some rather senior secretarial post and led a life more financially rewarding, but less rewarding in every other way, at least to her particular temperament.

Lottie, the maid-of-all-work, was a quite pathetic figure, which was clearly her chosen rôle. She always looked hollow-eyed and tremulous. She was at the beck and call of both Miss Hunt and Mrs. Mannon. Mrs. Mannon had the primary call on her, but often she was buffeted from one to the other with scarcely a breathing space. She spoke in a thin, horrid Cockney whine; she was teased and scolded by the other servants at some times, and at others petted and treated like a much-loved child. Sometimes, when she was fussed over, her voice became much nicer, which showed, perhaps, that the Eliza Doolittle sing-song was part of her particular affectation, or perhaps only that she had learned to speak more nicely when she tried.

At informal times, Miss Falconer would call her servants "dear" or "darling", and there was obviously a warmth and intimacy that indicated a status close to that of being part of the "family". Yet the servants never ate with their mistress. They ate in the kit-

chen, while Miss Falconer dined in the dining room, even if she dined alone. No Romantic will ever eat in the kitchen. If she has only a bedroom and a kitchen, she will make a dining room of the bedroom. Taking so much as breakfast in the kitchen is to dreadful modernism as talking to oneself is said to be to madness. But the kitchen as an eating-and-living place for the servants is considered a delightfully cosy arrangement for the reduced domestic circumstances of so many modern households.

Apart from the servants, there was, at that time, only one other semi-permanent resident at Miss Falconer's house, and that was Miss Priscilla Langridge. At that time Miss Langridge was something of a flapper, though she occasionally affected the circular skirt and high pony-tail of the 1950s. This was only allowable on account of her dottiness and the fact that she was never really likely to age emotionally or in common-sense beyond the age of thirteen. Intellectually, on the other hand, she was, or could be when the mood took her, formidable. She had been educated "privately"—that is, at home, and had escaped most of the rigours of a modern upbringing.

She had come to Oxford "to study"; not to take any formal course—she was not a member of any college—but just to read, sit in on the odd lecture, and talk. That was her idea of a good all-round education, and her family, apparently, agreed; or at least did not object so radically as to refuse her an allowance. How much actual study Miss Langridge did was debatable. Sometimes Miss Falconer



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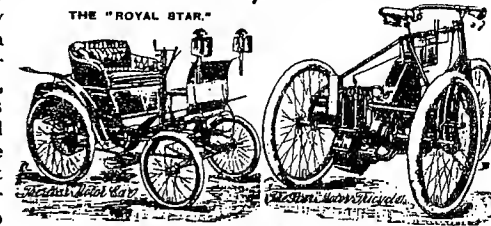
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made her work and set her essays, though mostly she allowed her to present her "work" *viva voce*, which, from the strictly educational point of view was no doubt a mistake, since Miss Langridge, with her piercing intelligence, great verbal fluency, and her fund of general reading (she was, as she admits, not actually well-read, but could give the impression of being so because she remembered a very high proportion of what she had read) and, above all, her capacity for daring and specious bluff was always able to give a good account of herself however little study she had actually done. The exception to this was at those times when Miss Martindale took a hand in her education—but that is another story.

Meeting Miss Langridge was a comfort and a reassurance to Miss Monticue and her entourage. Miss Falconer was a thrill and a delight, but Miss Langridge was something different, something quieter and in a way deeper. Miss Langridge was sound without effort, and sometimes, almost, despite her efforts. She was a girl to whom the idea of being anything other than sound had never really occurred; was, indeed, an idea which she could not properly understand. She was the nearest thing possible at this time to a second generation Romantic. She had been brought up almost completely apart from the modern world; had not encountered television until her late 'teens and then had not liked it. She recalls at the age of eight being asked by a strange child what sort of pop she liked, and replying "Cream Soda". From the child's response it was clear to her that he meant something quite different by the term "pop" from what she understood by it, but it was not for some years that she found out what that something was, and then she did not like it. She did like Space Invaders and the colourful florin-in-the-slot games that followed it, like Duck Shoot and Phoenix, a penchant which was to give rise to a notable chapter in the St. Bride's story at a later date. This was less a hankering after the modern world than a childish incomprehension of all that such things represented to her fellow-Romantics that made them dislike them. As far as she was concerned, they were silly and colourful and she was rather clever at them. The same was true of her occasional forays into '50s clothes. She liked their clean childishness; they were an affectation, certainly, but one that had nothing whatever to do with Elvis Presley, Teddy Boys or camp. '50s camp did later find its way into the Romantic Empire, but not through the agency of Miss Priscilla Langridge.

Miss Langridge's parents were not at all

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Romantics, but they, and in particular her mother, disapproved of much that was happening to young people in the modern world (which was why they had avoided sending Priscilla to school) and were much reassured by Miss Falconer, seeing her as respectable, respectful, neat, sensible and generally a good influence in a world too full of bad ones. It was a vision of Miss Falconer which would have surprised many of her friends; yet, though partial, it was perfectly correct.

The *grande dame* of the early Romantics and, to some extent, Miss Falconer's mentor, was Miss Hester St. John. Though in her mid-fifties, she seemed younger in her enthusiasm and affected vivacity and older in her supreme, confident authoritativeness. She was entirely an Edwardian matriarch, and as such, Miss Monticue fell in love with her at first sight. Her immediate hope was that Miss St. John would take her under her wing and make her her protégée. It seemed to her that this would give solidity to her somewhat solitary Edwardian world; make her feel that there was a sky above her and ground beneath her feet—an older generation; one might no longer feel that one was existing, self-generated in a vacuum with nothing behind one and nothing before one. There was, it was true, something exhilarating in such an existence, built as it was upon the act of will, the supremacy of whim and the lovely arrogance of self-creation; yet it was too modern and Promethean a style of existence for a real traditionalist to be fully happy with it.

Miss Monticue thus had a special reason for desiring the tutelage of Miss St. John, but she was quickly to discover that she was very far from being the first girl to whom this position had recommended itself. In fact, a certain proportion of all the girls Miss St. John ever met seemed to be taken up with the immediate desire to place themselves in her care. This proportion was not large: perhaps one per centum, perhaps considerably less; but since Miss St. John fulfilled frequent engagements to talk upon certain literary



subjects to various societies, and since she had a fairly wide-ranging social life, the number of young girls she met in the course of a year was quite large, and she gave the impression of collecting protégées in much the way that other people collected butterflies or first-day covers. These protégées varied in kind from ardent young literary followers, learning and amplifying her theories, and perhaps practising a little verse under her instruction, to amanuenses, to the pretty little maidservants who trotted about her house and often accompanied her on journeys. She always had a small retinue which changed fairly continually, except for one friend and a housekeeper who stayed with her always. She was not fickle, or if she was, her fickleness was only indulged because it served deeper purpose. Stated in its simplest and most personal form, this deeper purpose was just that, while she knew that she could never have more than a limited number of protégées at any one time, she could never bear to turn away any girl who she felt really needed her. She felt that the independence forced upon girls today was often a bad thing. Some girls, of course, want and need independence, but many others do not and are forced to fend for themselves in a way that has never been normal to human girls from tribal times to the Great War.

Miss St. John had a great many theories about what could and should be done for girls. One of her fundamental criticisms of the modern world was that it destroyed innocence, and she believed passionately that innocence could be regained. She outlined these ideas in an entitled "Innocence Regained", where she argues that innocence is of two kinds: that which once lost is irrecoverable because its loss is based upon the gaining of real and true experience or information. Of such a sort is the sexual innocence of childhood, and for this very reason it is a gross offence to teach the "facts of life" too soon to a child; but there is another sort of loss of innocence which is caused not by true but by false knowledge. Such loss of innocence has been foisted upon the modern world by the erroneous theories of Freud and can be put right by the intellectual demolition of those theories followed by an emotional and cultural re-training. In the same article, Miss St. John gave a brief but fascinating account of her re-training of a particular girl, how her diet of reading, her bodily carriage, her voice and manner were all changed outwardly in order to effect gradual but permanent changes upon her inner self.

We have heard Miss St. John expound her theme that the theories of Freud constitute

disinformation in the sense in which this term is used in military intelligence. Although the word is sometimes loosely used to mean merely "misinformation", disinformation is actually that species of misinformation which has the effect of spoiling the usefulness of information which the enemy already has. A piece of disinformation is a communication which leaves the recipient with less knowledge—or less usable knowledge—than he had before he received it. Freud's theories have had the effect of spoiling the natural perceptions, and understandings of human beings about the human condition, and of poisoning the emotional life of individuals and of civilisation as a whole. It was doubtless with this teaching of Miss St. John's in mind that Miss Falconer coined the aphorism:—"It must be conceded that Freud has made a lasting contribution to the sum total of human ignorance."

Having trained and educated her protégées in whatever way she judged right for each individual, Miss St. John usually allowed them to slip out of her immediate circle into a sort of penumbra which surrounded it. She would keep in touch; she would invite them to tea; but in many cases it was a somewhat painful transition and one which distressed Miss St. John almost as much as the girl concerned, because she disliked causing pain or disappointment to any one. The problem was solved whenever possible by "placing" the half-fledged girl among her growing circle. Miss Falconer took numbers of servants, in addition to the three permanent ones, who were all Miss St. John's cast-offs—as she occasionally said in self-deprecation—under her wing. She also looked after various clever girls for varying periods of time, and, indeed, much of the Olympian circle had come into being in this way; and it is probably true to say that the institution of "bonded service" so fundamental to the Romantic way of life had its practical origin in Miss St. John's lesser protégées, though they were not called bonded servants at this time, and certainly the theory of bonded service had quite another origin.

Even Miss Langridge owed her membership of the Charmed Circle to Miss St. John, though she had never been a protégée. Miss St. John was a friend of Miss Langridge's parents, and it was she who had encouraged their resolve to educate her in the way they had, and she who had introduced the girl to Miss Falconer and who, if she had not originated, had certainly assisted, the development of the scheme of studying privately in Oxford.

Miss St. John had the appearance of a

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well-dressed lady don of the old school, with only a touch of the Edwardian about her blouse and hair, which she always wore up. The Romantic passion for extravagant period dressing, which has never been as universal as some people assume, was much subtler and more cautious in the early days, especially as regarded anything predating the First World War. Subtle hints were considered more tasteful than flamboyant costume and the idea was that no one could be quite certain that you were not a modern person by looking at you. Miss Falconer broke this rule from an early stage, and her tendency has been gradually gaining ground ever since.

While Miss St. John was a subtle Edwardian in dress, her period was not really mistakable. Miss Monticue knew her instantly for one of her own. Her hair was at that time slightly greying and has since become a shade of steel-grey which her admirers consider quite perfect. Her face has a smooth serenity and her manner, though occasionally that of a dowager duchess of the Lady Bracknell stamp, is typically that of the sterling headmistress of the inter-war schoolgirl novel. Such headmistresses were wise, intelligent, honourable and good, and inspired the undying devotion of all the girls. They could be stern, but were always just, and usually saw into the hearts of people with wisdom and warm understanding. They knew when the girl who had landed herself in terrible trouble and had not a word to offer in her own defence, was a fundamentally decent sort who was silenced by some real or imaginary bond of honour.

Miss St. John had been brought up by a mother and by aunts who were real Edwardians,—who had been born under Victoria, reared under her or under Edward and retained many of the values of that era. Miss St. John had not been of a rebellious nature, or, if she had, had sided with her family and turned her rebellion outwards against the

world that surrounded them. She was saddened by the decline of civilisation; by the progressive coarsening of the human soul in general and the girlish soul in particular. She grew more inclined with each passing year to write off the modern world as a complete loss. She could see nothing in it of real value which could even begin to compensate for all the beautiful things that it was destroying. One imagines that it never occurred to her to do anything other than establish her own world apart from the wreck of civilisation. It was not with her an act of will as it was with Miss Falconer or Miss Monticue: it happened quite naturally, almost, one might say, unconsciously. Miss St. John is the sort of person who always forms the centre of her own world. That in her case this world must be radically different from the world surrounding her was not a decision taken by her, but by the forces of modernism. I do not think that it could ever have occurred to Miss St. John that she was seceding from the contemporary world. The contemporary world was seceding from truth, beauty, decency and sanity, and she was staying where she was. What else would any one do? She was not angry at the changes which had taken place in the world; rather she was sad as one would be sad at the death of an old and treasured friend. Sometimes her sadness was more than sadness; sometimes it was real grief—but always she regarded its cause as a sort of natural event, like death or plague or an earthquake; something which God had ordained for His own good reasons; something which would pass—for insanity can never be the natural and permanent order of things—though probably not in her lifetime; something which, like all evils, must be borne and, as far as possible, ignored. Her criticisms are always careful and judicious. It was left to Miss Falconer and others, like Sparrowhawk, the rapier-tongued satirist of *The Romantic*, to ply the monster of modernism with flashing barbs and razor-edged aphorisms. It was Miss Falconer who, when congratulated upon treating the modern world with the contempt it deserved, replied:—"You flatter me. I am not capable of that degree of contempt."

And, of course, the story is still not over, but then stories like this do not really end. More one day, perhaps!

### Thought for the Month

THERE is no creature in this world more abjectly and pitifully subservient than the weak man, utterly conditioned by his time, who imagines himself a rebel. SPARROWHAWK



# SPARROWHAWK



## The King is in the Altogether

IN A rather remarkable cutting from *The Sunday Telegraph*, Miss Mary Kenny says the following:

"... the advantage of being 44 years of age is that you can stop pretending you like the plays of Samuel Beckett when in fact you like the plays of Terence Rattigan; you can stop following the fashionable critics' diktats about the poetry of Seamus Heaney and go back to what you really love—Tennyson; and you are allowed to admit, without being horse-whipped publicly or even socially cut, that modern atonal music will never thrill like a real tune. A real tune out of Gilbert and Sullivan, that is. You are not obliged to admire abstract painting if you do not really like it."

What a strange world these people live in. Do they really spend 23 years of adult life plus several of adolescence pretending to admire these things, only to revert to their true feelings when age allows it? Presumably Miss Kenny did, at any rate; and one can only admire the frankness of her confession.

We all know, of course, that Modern Art, in all its branches, is like the Emperor's new clothes: an empty fraud admired only by the tallors themselves and by those who lack the moral courage to trust their own judgment and must pretend to see what is not there in order to avoid appearing ignorant or philistine.

Quite why any one should fear the charge of phillistinism from the modern "arty" establishment, whose members perpetually and loudly advocate the vulgarest and crudest possible social and political philosophies, which are obviously incompatible with the smallest vestige of taste or sensitivity, is a matter into which I shall not enquire too closely. Future ages will find not the smallest difficulty in labelling the late twentieth century a period of unparalleled philistinism; a philistinism manifested at least as much in its "art" establishment as in its yellow press and its hamburger chains—but many people find it difficult to dismiss a bumptious and powerful clique while it is actually alive and in power.

There are few enough things to treasure in such an age; one thing I shall treasure is this statement from one of the children who stood ooh-ing and aah-ing on the sidelines as the Emperor passed triumphantly on his way. "Of course he had no clothes," she says with wonderful insouciance. "We all knew that really. We were just pretending, in case the

crowd should turn on us."

In the rest of the cutting, Miss Kenny seems just the *slightest* bit embarrassed about her admission; embarrassed, that is, at her own iconoclasm; quick to say that those who really enjoy modern art have every right to do so. It is a sign of the times that she is not in the least embarrassed at having been for so long a party to a fraud.

## Equality is Theft

The punitive taxes upon wealth and inheritance which have been enforced upon every nation of the modern world, as if in accordance with some universal, international *diktat*, with the express purpose of turning the world into the egalitarian menagerie it has now become, have been called by Miss St. John, elsewhere in this issue, by their true name: systematic theft.

To this description, we would like to add a few comments. Theft is, of course, an evil in and of itself; but when such an evil becomes a cornerstone of public policy, it begets a chain of concomitant evils. This, indeed, is the primary intention of such taxation. Even its most ardent adherents do not pretend that its main function is to raise money. Its main function, as they so po-facedly put it, is to "redistribute wealth".

The economic democracy, or virtual parity of means, created by this official extortion lies at the root of much of the evil and most of the ugliness of the modern world. The main purpose of "redistribution", once one has stripped it of its pseudo-moral camouflage, is to ensure that no—or almost no—individual is capable of employing other individuals in his personal service, and that a near-monopoly of the organisation of human resources is achieved by governments and large business interests. It is the last stage of the transition from the human and personal organisation of society to its complete domination by political and financial interests.

Stepping in from this broad perspective, we see a thousand more limited effects of this economic levelling—from the ubiquity of slickly moronic advertising to the desecration of every town, village and country lane by garishly-painted motor-cars whose hideous design exactly expresses that strange combination of lounging casualness, pushy haste and gaudy pursuit of gratification which constitutes the modern proletarian mentality.

We do not mean to insinuate, however, that this is what the lower classes are naturally like, or that the modern world is the exteriorisation of the mentality of the mass of humanity—the world which they were

—Continued on p. 26

# COUNTY MYTH

EXPOSED

A new book by Fr. Francis of the Motherhood of Our Lady

HANDS up how many of you chaps think that the Counties of Britain have been officially changed? How many of you think that Cumberland and Westmoreland have been abolished and replaced with something that sounds like a deplorable new cheese? How many of you think Huntingdonshire is a thing of the past and that Wales now only contains counties called "Gwent" and "Dyfed" and other plastic-leek pseudo-archaisms? Go on, put your hands right up. It is not as if any one can see you, sitting at home reading your maggie.

Well, I can see you, of course, but then I am the writer, so I do not matter. Quite a lot of you, wasn't it? (Do not worry, I will not be naming names). Even among those of you who refuse to use the new "counties" there are quite a lot who think the old ones have been officially and legally abolished—like English money.

Well, they have not. Cumberland and Cardiganshire, Hampshire and Huntingdonshire, Yorkshire and—oh, golliwogs, there isn't another one beginning with 'Y', is there? Well, all of them are alive and well, and every bit as legal and official as they were 50 years ago or 500 years ago; nor have their boundaries changed by one inch.

I know, because I have a book here that proves it. Proves it beyond a shadow of doubt.

So what, you ask, about those beastly changes in 1974. They happened, didn't they? We may hate them. We may ignore or defy them; but they happened. Yes, they did. But they affected nothing more than *administrative areas*. As a Government spokesman said to *The Times* on the day they were introduced:

"The new county boundaries are solely for the purpose of defining areas of local government... [they] will not alter the traditional boundaries of Counties, nor is it intended that the loyalties of people living in them will change."

Many other official spokesmen are quoted to the same effect. The idea that the existence of a County is in any way dependent on local government is simply bizarre. Yorkshire has never been a local government unit. Does that mean that the county of Yorkshire has never existed? Counties have existed for centuries before local government in the modern sense was thought of. As one writer puts it: "Why should it be assumed that the abolition of the county council, which had existed for only three-quarters of a century, marked the end of the long life of Middlesex [recognised] for upwards of ten or twelve centuries before the creation of the county council?"

Who wrote that last sentence? A Romantic? A County loyalist? No, a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Department

# The Strange Case of the COUNTIES

that DIDN'T change



Available from R.O.O.T.S. or from The Romantic at £6-10s post free

of the Environment in 1987, expressing the official view of the Department.

So why, if this is so clearly and unequivocally the case, is the whole nation plagued by the *illusion* that the Counties have changed? This is the mystery which this fascinating book sets out to unravel.

There are three main villains in the story—the Post Office, the "mass-media" and the map-makers (led by Ordnance Survey). Each of these has played a leading rôle in publicising and encouraging the misuse of administrative regions as if they were geographical Counties. In their train follow hundreds of companies, semi-official bodies and other organisations who have followed their lead.

Quite why they have done this is the real conundrum. Certainly no Government body has ever instructed them to do so (and the Post Office, despite popular misconceptions, is *not* a Government body, and has no right to dictate the forms of addresses). One may conjecture that man (and especially bureaucratic man) had become so "softened up" by the horde of ugly changes foisted upon him in the stinking sixties and septic seventies that anything which even vaguely resembled a new world-changing *diktat* called forth his immediate, Pavlovian, grovelling obeisance.

Probably. But there is more to it than that. Bureaucrats and apparatchiks often become positively abusive when questioned about their use of pseudo-Counties. There seems to be a positive fervour to "sweep away the old"; and the present writer suspects that its motivations lie deeper than we know.

A recent correspondent and subscriber (!) to *The Romantic* wrote: "I admit to a heartfelt admiration for much of the culture of the



1960s from anti-'Nam protest songs to brutalist tower blocks; I revel in and insist upon the use of post-71 currency and post-74 county names, and feel privileged to have witnessed their respective births." We are reminded of students at an American university, demonstrating for a "multi-cultural" syllabus, chanting "Hi-ho, Hi-ho, western civ. has got to go." In both cases, we see the strange, inverted passion behind the carefully disguised and justified "rational" arguments which are normally put forward for change.

There comes a point in the brainwashing process when the victim begins to love his tormentor. It is as the will cracks, as dozens of studies have shown, that the victim of brainwashing suddenly begins to look upon the man who is responsible for starving, freezing, beating and torturing him with a deep, inexplicable and maudlin affection.

So it is with a people. When for a long enough time, it has had its roots torn up, its loyalties denigrated, its whole life subjected to the replacement of all that is decent and beautiful by all that is ugly, banal and diseased, there comes a point where that people—or at least its weaker, more subservient or more highly-strung elements; notably its bureaucrats and petty-intellectuals—begins to love and worship every fresh in-

fiction and to hate, with a real and rather hysterical hatred, everything which stands for truth, stability, sanity and freedom.

These larger questions are not, of course, the immediate subject of the book, but in his chapter on why Counties matter, Father Francis examines this side of the question, saying:—"Changing the meaning of the word County is part of the creation of a present which owes nothing to the past." He quotes Orwell's depiction in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* of a world where "nothing exists except an endless present"; and C.H. Douglas's description of the making of 20th-century modernism: "a common factor is the appearance of plans everywhere designed to make people forget their historical attachments."

Tradition is the greatest enemy of the modernist tyrant (and we do not mean merely the political tyrant) because tradition is the only thing he cannot re-make in his own image. That is why he, and his strangelove zombies, must destroy tradition everywhere, they find it, on any and every pretext they can find.

The Counties are one of our most enduring links with tradition; and while, ironically enough, there is no danger of their *actually* being destroyed, there is every danger of their being wiped out of the hearts and minds of the nation by the relentless promulgation

spokesman spoke of the Government "giving" so many millions to "the rich" which might have been better spent elsewhere.

"Giving"? When some young thug who makes his living from beating and robbing the elderly and the defenceless—have you noticed how almost every modern writer uses the most ridiculous imaginable Americanism for this activity these days?—when, as I say, such a thug decides to spend a day in bed, does he speak of having "given" sums of money to all the people whom he has failed to rob that day? If some particularly vicious thug, who was accustomed to steal several hundred pounds each day were to decide to retire early, at the age of 25, on the proceeds of his thuggery, perhaps, when he was 50, the Government should award him a life peerage in view of the many thousands of pounds he has "given" to the poor by not robbing them over the past 25 years. Perhaps he should also be awarded some medical prize, or honorary degree, for his large contribution to public health in the form of the various stabblings and limb-breakings he has refrained from carrying out.

The life peerage, at any rate, seems a splendid idea. He would probably be far less of a thief than most other recipients of such honours over the last quarter-century.

# Letters to the Editress



MADAM, The awful '60s saw the emergence of the decadence which came to be known as the "alternative culture." Today it is people like ourselves who offer the alternative culture, and it is to our values that the West will eventually return.

One minor comment—too minor to be classed as a criticism. Do not be too hard on television. As you intimated in one of your articles, it is by means of the old films which are frequently shown on the small screen that the youngsters of today can become acquainted with the character, tone and manners of the far-off '30s. Recently my eldest daughter (aged 24) watched a charming British film made in 1937, entitled *Brief Ecstasy*. It was a "triangle" drama which ended with the wife's renunciation of her would-be paramour in favour of her devoted husband. Like *Brief Encounter*, made a few years later, it stood four-square for courage, loyalty, honesty and honour. After it was over, my daughter asked me, wonderingly:—"Were people really as decent as that in those days?" I could only answer that at least they tried to be—which I believe to be true. At any rate, there were generally-accepted standards.

YOURS &c. MR. EDWARD FRANCIS.

*I think I can speak for our contributors in general when I say that in disparaging television we are not casting aspersions upon old films, nor even on the television programmes of the '50s and early '60s (the value of some of these might be questioned, but they certainly would not attract the odium which modern television has done).*

*You speak of people's trying to be decent in*

of the myth that they have been destroyed. This book clarifies the position admirably. If every one in Britain understood the essence of this book, the assault on the counties would be stopped in its tracks. Even campaigns to "bring back the Counties" help to propagate the myth that they have gone. They have not gone. The only thing necessary is for people to understand that they have not.

And you, dear reader, what should you do? In the first place, you should *always* use your correct address (if you are unsure of it, look at the envelope your *Romantic* came in). This does not cause delays as the Post Office like to threaten. A survey taken for the book shows that correct addresses sometimes cause a delay of one post and sometimes actually speed delivery. On balance there is no difference. The *Romantic* never uses a bon-

*the past and of your daughter's incredulity—occasioned by the fact that modern behaviour is so abysmal. Now, that abysmal state of affairs has been brought about in no small part by the ceaseless corruption of television. No single agency has done so much to destroy decent values in the hearts of ordinary people as television. This is not a criticism of the technical means which bring you old films; it is a criticism of the evil cliques who have used those technical means systematically over the last twenty years to spread corruption and nastiness and to destroy decency wherever they can get their grubby hands on it—which is in practically every drawing-room in the country.*

*That is what we mean when we use the word "televiston", and that, I hope, is what our readers take us to mean. It is an evil and one has not only the right but the duty to denounce it as such.*

*I should perhaps add, by way of clarification, that there are Romantics who argue that television—or at least the amount of television broadcasting that now exists—is a bad thing in itself, regardless of content. We will not go into the arguments for and against this, but we should say that it is not nearly so fundamental to Romantic thought and feeling as is the above condemnation of contemporary television.*

go-county or a post-code and has experienced no problems. If you are nervous, use the post-code, but *never* use a pseudo-county for your own address or any one else's.

And secondly, either buy this book or order it from your local library (or both!). It is full of fascinating information on the subject, and even includes a rare guest appearance from our own Pippit in her less usual rôle of cartoonist.

*The Strange Case of the Counties that Didn't Change*, by Father Francis of the Motherhood of Our Lady is available from R.O.O.T.S. Heritage County Conservation, 48 Shalmarsh Rd., Higher Bebington, Cheshire at £6-10s post free. The special Sherlock Holmes Edition, limited to 112 signed and numbered copies, is £11-10s.

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